

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 14, 2021

Isabella Casillas Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street SW
Washington, DC 20416

Administrator Guzman:

We write today to bring to your attention our concerns regarding the current status of the Small Business Administration (SBA) Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program (SVOG).

Through interactions with local venue operators across the City of Philadelphia and Southeastern Pennsylvania, we have learned about a disconcerting lack of progress in getting urgently needed SVOG funding out the door and into the hands of venues in our region and elsewhere across the country.

Nearly six months after the passage of the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act in December of 2020, the legislation that enabled the SVOG program, and nearly two months after the SVOG application portal was opened, it is our understanding that fewer than 100 applications have been approved by the SBA to this point, with only seven in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania approved out of hundreds that have sought relief.

For these locally owned small businesses that have been struggling to make ends meet for the past sixteen months since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this lack of progress is unacceptable if these businesses are going to survive.

As Representatives in Congress who have been contacted by a number of affected venues in our districts, and who are fully committed to advocating to ensure that these businesses get the support they so desperately need, we urge the SBA to take all necessary steps to ensure that the funds to be provided through the SVOG program are disbursed immediately to those businesses that have applied. We further ask that the SBA provide us with a written response to this letter as to the reasons for the unprecedented delays in providing SVOG funding to eligible businesses, as well as an estimated timetable for when these funds will be disbursed.

Hundreds of venue operators across our region and Commonwealth are stuck. Without these funds, they are unable bear the considerable costs of reopening, even as public health conditions improve and other businesses resume more normal operations. These small and locally owned

businesses need SVOG funding to provide the kickstart to get people back in their doors, and with every day that passes without relief, they fall further behind. These are businesses that generate considerable economic activity that benefits their local communities, and without this relief, our local economies face job loss, and in many cases, the loss of businesses that are an integral part of the fabric of our local communities. We cannot allow this to happen.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your reply and actions to address the issues we have raised. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

Sincerely,



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress